

U.S. Congressman Mike Pence discussed the oil spill, the national debt and other news of the day on CNN's State of the Union with Candy Crowley:

Transcript:

Candy Crowley: Let me bring Congressman Pence into this. I remember in Katrina, some of the first complaints about the President was when the administration said 'we didn't know it was this bad.' And it wasn't really a fairly good excuse for a lot of people because it was fairly obvious. How do you judge how the administration has been doing? I'm going to anticipate you think he hasn't done as well as Congressman Clyburn thinks.

Rep. Pence: I respect Jim's opinion on this, but this is not a matter of the president's style. It's not a matter of public relations. This administration did not send cabinet-level officials to the region until ten days after the explosion occurred. It would be two weeks after the explosion occurred that we began to hear from Members of Congress from the region that you literally had fishermen standing on docks. You had parish presidents that were waiting for BP to give them permission to go out and deploy boom to protect their wetlands and their coastline. Then we began hearing from Governor Bobby Jindal about a delay in permitting for the construction of barrier islands.

I think what's become clear to people at every end of the political spectrum, and now even on the editorial page of the New York Times, is that this administration was slow to respond and continues to fail to provide the kind of energetic leadership that the American people, and, Candy, that the law demands. Under the Oil Pollution Act that was adopted after the Exxon Valdez disaster, it says that the President of the United States shall develop a plan to contain the discharge.

Candy Crowley: But Congressman, he has, in fact, been down there. He's been looking over it.

He put Thad Allen down there and said 'here's my point guy.' He can't plug the leak. He can't clean up the oil. He tells his people to go and do that. Why isn't that sufficient?

Rep. Pence: He could have picked up the phone and called the CEO of BP sooner than 50 days. I'm glad he's meeting with the Chairman of BP next week. But, I think the fact that he never spoke to the CEO of British Petroleum for the first 50 days of this incident is emblematic of the kind of detached style of leadership that we're seeing here. And this business about the President looking for somebody's A-double-S to kick this week, as the New York Times said this morning, I think everybody in America knew on day two whose A-double-S ought to be kicked.

The reality is BP is responsible to plug that hole. BP is financially responsible to contain the impacts of the discharge on the coast and on the economy. But that's our coastline and the President should be marshalling every resource of this country, every resource available around the world to spare our coastline and to spare the families in the region the extent of the impact of this spill.

Candy Crowley: We are back with Congressmen Clyburn and Pence. Congressman Pence, the president has written a letter to the leadership in the House and Senate saying he wants \$50 billion in emergency funds to stave off state layoffs: teachers, policemen, firemen. Rahm Emanuel did an interview with the Washington Post, in which he said the following in response to: 'But, what about the deficit?' "While some people say you have to spend and some people say you have to cut, the president wants to talk about both cuts and investing." How do you interpret that?

Rep. Pence: I interpret that this is an administration that is groping for some economic policy. The truth is that the president likes to talk about the failed economic policies of the past. The truth is the economic policies of this administration and this Congress are the failed economic policies of the present. Unemployment was at 7.5% when they passed their so-called stimulus bill, borrowed a trillion from future generations. It's at 9.7% nationally today.

What the American people know is that we can't borrow and spend and bail our way back to a growing economy. We need fiscal discipline in Washington, D.C. We need to abandon this spending approach to stimulus, adding to deficits and debt, and we need to provide immediate across-the-board tax relief for working families, small businesses, and family farms. We need a new approach. The economic policies of this administration and this Congress are failing to put America back to work.

On the national debt:

Rep. Pence: What also got us into that problem was a doubling of the national debt under the last Republican administration, was a Wall Street bailout, that now they're trying to make permanent in the Financial Services bill. We're talking about breaking from the runaway federal spending that characterized this administration and the last administration and say 'it's time for fiscal discipline in Washington, D.C.' Let's reject the deficits and the debt and the bailouts, and let's add to that the kind of fast-acting across-the-board tax relief that John F. Kennedy did back in the 1960s, that we did in the early part of the Bush Administration, the Reagan Administration. It's always what works to get the economy moving again.

Candy Crowley: I want to ask you about something that Governor Mitch Daniels of Indiana, you know him well, said recently about the next presidential race. 'The next president, whoever he is, would have to call a truce on the so-called social issues. We're going to just have to agree to get along for a little while until the economic issues are resolved.' Do we need to stop paying -- not paying attention, but concentrating on abortion, school prayer, any number of things that have been hot button issues for Republicans.

Rep. Pence: First, let me say, I haven't spoken to Governor Daniels about what he meant, and I think Mitch Daniels is the best governor in the United States of America. He's done a fantastic job for the people of Indiana.

Candy Crowley: Do you think abortion needs to be put on the back burner?

Rep. Pence: Well, it's also true that Barack Obama is the most pro-abortion president in American history. This administration has worked to expand public funding for abortion at home and abroad since the first day Barack Obama took office. And I believe with all my heart that Republicans need to continue to fight for the sanctity of life and the sanctity of marriage with everything we've got in 2010 and in 2012.